

# A WAR CATECHISM

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## Pertinent and Vital Reasons

Why

## The American Executive, Congress and People

Should Unite in Deciding That

**The Government should at once build The Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal**

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1. Why was there a great shortage of coal in the Northwest, the Ohio Valley, New York and New England last winter?  
Because of lack of means to transport coal from the mines.
2. Why were 9,000,000 tons of iron ore permitted to lie unused on the shores of Lake Erie which were sorely needed by Ohio Valley furnaces?  
Because of lack of means to transport them.
3. Why were 23 out of 54 furnaces of the Carnegie Steel Company idle in January?  
Because of lack of transportation for the iron ore, coal and coke they needed.
4. Is it not true that the lake vessels brought to Lake Erie ports last year many millions more tons of iron ore than the railroads could carry promptly to the furnaces and that while vast quantities of ore were lying at Conneaut, Ashtabula, Cleveland and other lake ports, many furnaces were idle for lack of this material?  
Yes, but this situation would not have existed had the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal been in operation.
5. Is it not true that the lake vessels were available to carry the 6,000,000 tons of coal needed by the Northwest last winter, but which was not mined and transported because of lack of railroad cars?  
Yes. If the canal had been in existence it could have carried this coal from mine to lake.
6. Is it not true that because of the great shortage of coal in the Northwest and of iron ore at a large number of furnaces it was necessary last fall to use 50 per cent of the freight cars of 47 railroads for a considerable period and that this caused the entire transportation system of the country to be congested with resulting loss of billions of dollars?  
Yes, but this would not have happened had the Lake Erie and Ohio River canal been in operation.
7. What's the use of the lake vessels bringing down more iron ore this year than last if there will not be sufficient cars to transport it quickly to the furnaces?  
There is no good reason, but with the canal in operation such a situation would be avoided.
8. What's the use of telling people to order their coal early when for lack of transportation their orders cannot be filled because the fuel cannot be carried to the would be customers?  
The answer is of course to provide as soon as possible against such a situation by using our existing waterways and constructing new ones.
9. Why were 418 vessels loaded with war material and other supplies for the allied armies held up in New York harbor for a long time in January?  
Because of lack of coal which could have been provided had there been adequate means of transportation.
10. Why were many industries engaged in making much needed war material unable to operate fully and regularly?  
Because of lack of transportation for raw and manufactured material.
11. How could most of the transportation required for coal, coke and iron ore have been provided?  
By the full and proper operation of the Ohio River, the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal and the New York Barge Canal.
12. How much traffic could have been carried over such a continuous waterway in a year?  
From 50,000,000 to 90,000,000 tons according to the size of the locks on the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal.
13. What is the estimated shortage in coal alone next winter?  
From 60,000,000 to 80,000,000 tons.
14. To what will this largely be due?  
To lack of miners and of transportation.
15. Why will there be a lack of miners?  
Largely because lack of cars has compelled mines to work only on part time and the men have sought work in better paying and more regularly operated industries.
16. If proper means of transportation were provided would there be sufficient coal mined to supply our war essential and many other industries?  
Yes, according to the emphatic testimony of many prominent coal producers.

17. Will there again be a large shortage of iron ore and coke at many furnaces next winter, and also a shortage of coal for heating homes in many sections?

All the indications point to this.

18. Why will such a shortage or famine result?

Largely because of lack of sufficient transportation.

19. What is the estimated loss to the people in the reduction of output, loss of wages and increase in prices due entirely to lack of transportation during the last two years.

From \$10,000,000,000 to \$20,000,000,000.

20. Is this loss likely to be repeated and exceeded during the next five years?

Yes.

21. How can such great losses be effectually stopped?

By completing the improvement of the Ohio River and building the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal within the next three years and by operating them in close cooperation with each other, with the New York Barge Canal and intra-coastal canals, the Great Lakes and the railroads.

22. How much would it cost to complete the Ohio River improvement and build the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal?

About \$90,000,000 or less than one tenth the amount the Government has already ordered to be spent on the improvement and proper operation of the railroads.

23. How would the relief afforded by the operation of the above mentioned waterways compare with that afforded from the expenditure of the above mentioned sum by the Government on the railroads?

It would equal or exceed such relief.

24. How long will it take to expend the \$950,000,000 to \$2,000,000,000 proposed to be laid out by the Government on the railroads?

From three to five years.

25. How soon could the Ohio River be improved and the Lake Erie and Ohio Canal be ready for operation? In less than three years.

26. Where would the labor and materials be obtained for the construction of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal?

The German prisoners and internes could be employed as they are in Canada on the Welland Canal and convict and Mexican labor could be used. The Government can commandeer the materials, which will be but a fractional part of the amount required for the new railroad work.

27. Why is the building of this canal a vital war necessity?

Because its construction will insure the regular and full operation of great war material industries and the prompt transmission of their products to the front. Also as it is wise to build great ordnance and other war material plants which may not be completed before the war is over and possibly never be used, it is equally wise to build this canal which can be ready as soon as the plants and will continually be used in both war and peace.

28. Why would the canal be a good investment?

Because in war and in peace it would annually save the Government and people more than its entire cost of construction and operation. In war it would help shorten the conflict and save many thousands of lives and great suffering as well as great delay in making and forwarding war material and food to the front.

29. Why would the canal help the Atlantic Coast States?

Because it would provide the last link in a safe interior waterway for coal and other material from the Ohio and Mississippi valleys to the Great Lakes and thence to New York Harbor where connection would be made with the intracoastal waterways.

30. Why would the canal help the Northwest?

Because it would provide an easy, cheap and reliable means of transfer of the products of that region to the Mississippi and Ohio valleys and the products of the latter regions to the ports on the Great Lakes, and prevent coal, iron ore and other shortages.

31. Why would the canal help the Mississippi and Ohio valleys?

Because it would provide the means of interchanging their products with those of the Great lakes region and the Atlantic coast regularly and cheaply.

32. How would the Western farmers profit by the canal?

It would release many thousands of railroad cars to carry the products of their farms and would therefore greatly aid in providing them with much cheaper coal and other products as well as enabling them to ship their produce cheaper.

33. Why should the canal connecting the Great lakes and the Ohio River be built on the location selected for the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal instead of further east or west?

Because it follows the lowest elevation of land between the Allegheny Mountains and the Wabash river, because the distance between the river and the lake is the shortest by far of any possible route and because it traverses the greatest tonnage district in the world. Further; it will cost much less to construct and operate than a canal on any other route. This canal will also make transfers more quickly and more cheaply between all the great cities on the lakes and the Ohio and lower Mississippi rivers than any other could. By this canal the distance by water between New York harbor and New Orleans will be over 500 miles shorter than by any other possible route. The Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal will also have ten times as much tonnage to carry as a canal by any other route.

34. Is the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal an easily feasible project, is it desirable and necessary and will it be profitable?

It has been found to be so by several successive investigations made by the State of Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the United States National Waterways Commission, and the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal Company. In these investigations in all about \$300,000 were spent. Among the eminent engineers who have passed favorably on the subject were Brigadier General Henry L. Abbot, U. S. A. engineer, Brig. Gen. W. H. Bixby, Chief Engineer U. S. A.; Col. H. C. Newcomer, U. S. A.; Maj. Gen. W. L. Sibert; Col.



Thomas P. Symons, U. S. A., retired, chief advisory engineer of the New York Barge canal; Lewis N. Haupt, member of the Nicaragua Canal Commission; Maj. N. Hutton, chief engineer Baltimore harbor, and Isham P. Randolph and Frederic P. Stearns, members of the U. S. Board of Consulting engineers of the Panama Canal; George M. Lehman, chief engineer of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal Board and Thomas P. Roberts and Emil Swensson advisory engineers of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal Company. Lieut. Col. H. W. Stickle, U. S. Engineer at Pittsburgh told the Rivers and Harbors Committee on May 9, 1918 that he regarded the canal as a vital war necessity and that it could be constructed in two and a half years from the time all the money was provided.

35. Who originated the idea of building the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal?

George Washington, a century and a third ago. He declared in one of his letters on the subject that it was "of vital commercial and political importance."

36. What route did he select?

Practically the same now fixed upon.

37. Why will the proposed Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal be the greatest interior artificial waterway in the world?

Because it will have more capacity and more tonnage to draw upon than the Panama, Suez, Kiel, New York Barge, Cape Cod and Manchester canals combined although they cost over \$1,200,000,000, while its cost will only be about one twentieth that amount.

38. Why will this be so?

Because it will connect the 130,000,000 tonnage on the Great Lakes with the 15,000,000 tonnage on the Monongahela and the 10,000,000 tonnage on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and will greatly increase the lake and river tonnage. Also it will traverse the greatest tonnage district in the world, and in addition will be the last link in a great interior waterway system reaching from the entire Mississippi valley to the Great lakes and thence to the whole Atlantic coast and will connect up 32 States and Canada and furnish a safe interior passage from New York harbor to the Panama Canal. Boats can be built to traverse this canal and all the other interior waterways between New York Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico including the Great lakes without transfer of cargo.

39. What will be the effect of its construction on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and their chief tributaries?

It will make clear the need of their full and proper improvement, without which they can never be used to anything like their full capacity, and will vastly increase their tonnage. As soon as it is assured that it will be constructed and operated at an early day proper terminal facilities will be provided on it and on the waterways connecting with it as has been the case with the New York barge canal.

40. Can any one point out a more efficient and economical means of affording great and important aid in prosecuting the war than by building this canal, which will carry from 38,000,000 to 76,000,000 tons of freight annually, which the Director of railroads could order to be transported over it, thereby replacing or relieving many thousands of railroad cars whose aggregate cost would far exceed that of the canal, which could be available as soon as these cars could be provided?

No such great, effective and economical means of relieving transportation congestion and of promptly supplying coal, iron ore, food and other material to points where they are vitally needed by the Government and people can be provided than by this canal and the waterways it will connect.

41. Why when the canalized Monongahela River has availed to supply many great munition factories with coal and other great industries are now being built on its banks should not the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal be constructed to supply these and many other similar factories elsewhere with iron ore, the lack of which has interfered much with their operation regularly?

Apparently there is no valid reason.

42. Why when the Government is preparing to provide many new barges for carrying coal from Philadelphia, Baltimore and Norfolk to New England and New York by an ocean route exposed to enemy attack should it not build the Lake Erie and Ohio River canal by which in connection with the New York barge canal, Long Island Sound and the Cape Cod canal coal could be carried by an entirely safe route from West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania to New York and New England?

The only reason is the old one of pursuing a penny wise and pound foolish policy.

43. Why when the Government has increased rates on iron ore because of the lack of railroad facilities and enhanced cost of railroad operation, which increases will amount to more than \$10,000,000 a year, should it not build this canal which will reduce the cost of iron ore and coal more than \$20,000,000 annually?

No reason at all. The canal should be built at once and many millions of dollars be thereby saved annually to the Government and people.

44. What's the use of greatly increasing our ships if they cannot be supplied promptly with coal and cargoes?

There would be but little use. However, build the canal and there will be no shortage of fuel or cargoes for the ships.

45. What's the use of the Government investing \$100,000,000 and more in great plants at Charleston, W. Va. and Neville Island if those plants cannot be regularly and properly worked for lack of transportation?

Such a risk can be avoided by building the canal.

46. As these plants are to be permanent and cannot be fully completed for three years why should they not be provided with proper waterway transportation within that time?

They should be by improving the Ohio and building the canal.

47. What's the use of shutting down a lot of industries to save fuel which could be supplied if proper means of transportation were provided when the operation of such industries would increase the wealth of the people and enable them to contribute more to the cost of carrying on the war?

There is no good reason for doing this and there would be no necessity with the canal in operation.

48. Why if the 32 States which would benefit from the building of the Lake Erie and Ohio River canal contribute the great bulk of the war taxes, (the Pittsburgh revenue district alone collecting \$372,159,701 during the

last fiscal year), and produce nearly all the war material should not a small fraction of the taxes they pay be used to provide the great relief in transportation, not only for them but for the whole Nation, which would result from the construction of the Lake Erie and Ohio River canal and the improvement of the Ohio River?

National safety, equity and fairness dictate that this be done.

49. Why should not the United States provide now the means of transportation which will enable it to compete for foreign and domestic trade after the war?

Common prudence and the example of foreign nations which are now preparing for the competition after the war should dictate that this be done.

50. If the possibility of an early peace does not prevent the Government from launching great munition enterprises and incurring immense expenditures for railroads which cannot be completed for years should it not at the same time undertake a comparatively small expenditure for our waterways?

The only answer is that our waterways should be at once improved and constructed.

51. If by spending \$100,000,000 to complete the improvement of the Ohio River and the building of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal the Government can prevent in three years any danger of a coal and iron ore shortage, keep its munition plants going regularly and forward their output promptly, cheapen the price of all products and meet foreign trade competition after the war why should it not lay out one tenth to one twentieth of the amount it proposes to spend on the railroads and thus double the relief?

It should certainly do so.

52. Why should Americans put off any longer the decision of this most vital question of transportation, which is already being dealt with by the European Nations, which are using and improving their waterways and planning new ones for use in times of peace while in the midst of this terrible conflict?

They should no longer delay but should at once get busy and provide these waterways.

53. Why will the Government not spend \$90,000,000 now for the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal and the Ohio River improvement when by doing so it can save itself and the people more than \$900,000,000 in ten years after the work is completed?

There is no good reason except the proverbial slowness of the Americans in making up their minds to do absolutely necessary things which was noted by George Washington a century and a third ago when he wrote: "In this as in most other matters we are too slow," which slowness is only equalled by their quickness in doing after they have come to a decision.

54. Why if the Government finds it advisable to take over the conduct of traffic and provide boats for and operate the New York Erie Barge canal, the New Jersey canals, the Cape Cod canal, the Mississippi River, the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Coast canals and to purchase the Chesapeake and Delaware canal as well as to dredge and open up the Illinois and Michigan canal, should it not connect the traffic on all these waterways by constructing the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal, thereby relieving the railroads of 80,000,000 or more tons of unprofitable tonnage and at the same time aiding the Government to win the war and to save itself and the people billions of dollars in war and peace?

The reason for Government action in the matter of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal is much stronger than in any other of the waterways mentioned.

55. If the Director of Railroads has the power to also control transportation on the waterways and has the use of \$1,000,000,000 to \$2,000,000,000 to provide improvements and new equipment for the railroads and boats for the existing waterways why when the chief object of his work is to increase the transportation facilities of the country cannot he devote from one twelfth to one twenty-fifth of the money at his disposal for this purpose to doubling the transportation relief by building the Lake Erie and Ohio River canal and improving the Ohio River?

There does not appear to be any proper reason, but if power is lacking to him to improve and construct these waterways then it should be promptly conferred on him by Congress or the Executive.

56. Why when the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal may prove a vital factor in winning the war by greatly aiding in the full and steady operation of our greatest war material industries and in promptly transmitting their products to the front and would also vastly relieve and cheapen transportation both in peace and war, prevent great suffering and loss from coal and other shortages and enable us to compete for foreign trade would it not be wise for our Government to at once enter upon its construction?

It would not only be most wise but every consideration of prudence and patriotic self interest dictates that the Government should begin this work immediately.

57. Why when it is plainly evident that the railroads cannot alone deal with the transportation question in this country either in war or peace and their difficulties and congestion will be worse than ever next winter and in each succeeding year, should not measures be taken to provide the greatest and most effective aid through the largest possible use of all available waterways?

Common sense suggests that this is the only reasonable thing to do.

58. Would not money, time, suffering and delay be saved by doing this now instead of putting off what is inevitable until next year or some subsequent one?

Yes. It is an uneconomic policy and one fraught with great danger not only to this Nation but to the Allied cause to postpone this matter longer, thereby practically giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

59. Is there not enough evidence available now to decide this matter?

Yes, most abundant evidence.

60. Why not then decide this matter affirmatively, get busy and build the canal and improve the Ohio River?

The answer is now entirely up to the Government Executive and Congress, and it should be given promptly and effectively in the form of providing authority and money for the immediate construction of the Lake Erie and Ohio River Canal.

Issued by

THE LAKE ERIE AND OHIO RIVER CANAL BOARD

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